



October 31, 2007

## Memorandum

**To:** Health Care Quality and Cost Council  
**From:** Chris Anderson  
**Re:** Summary of key survey research findings

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This memorandum summarizes the main findings of a survey of 500 Massachusetts residents. Respondents were screened to insure they were at least 18 years old and responsible for household health care decisions. Interviews were conducted by telephone between the dates of October 9 – 14, 2007. Full survey results will be presented at the November 7<sup>th</sup> Council meeting

## Summary of Key Findings

Among the two-thirds of residents with Internet access, interest in a website providing quality and cost information is high. College educated women are the most likely to be interested.

- 8-in-10 residents with Internet access say they would be very (58%) or somewhat (26%) likely to visit the website.
- Women between the ages of 31 and 65 (68%), college graduates (63%) and those with household incomes over \$100,000 (69%) are the most likely to say they would be *very* likely to visit the website.

Residents are much more likely to visit the website for information related to quality than cost, although a majority say they would be more likely to use the site to research cost if they were required to pay 10% of their medical bills.

- By a 10-to-1 ratio, residents would be more interested in using the website to research information about the quality (49%) of health care than about the out-of-pocket cost (5%) of health care.
- When quality is juxtaposed against the cost to an insurance company, 57% say they'd be more interested in quality information and 8% say cost.
- Two-thirds (66%) of residents say they would be more likely to use the website for cost information if they were required to pay 10% of medical bills before their insurance company paid anything.

Residents heavily rely on doctors regarding decisions about where to seek care. Doctors are viewed as extremely reliable sources for information about cost and quality, and most residents would get their doctor's opinion before changing hospitals based on information they find on the website. Highlighting the importance of the doctor-patient relationship, however, many residents say they would switch doctors if they learned on a reliable website that their doctor had below average quality ratings.

- Doctors' recommendations are currently the most important factor to residents when deciding where to go for care—rated very important by 81% of residents.
- If residents found on a trusted website that a hospital, different from the one recommended by their doctor, had higher quality ratings, 61% would go back to their doctor for advice about where to go, while just 19% would go to the hospital with higher ratings without first consulting their doctor.
- Three-quarters (74%) of residents would be likely to change doctors if they discovered on a reliable website that their doctor had below average quality ratings compared to other doctors in the area.
- Fully 9-in-10 residents find their doctor to be very (66%) or somewhat (25%) believable regarding the cost and quality of health care.